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AUTHOR Gillespie, Ros; Collins, Colin
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ABSTRACT

After the death of Chairman Mao in 1976, the educational and economic policies of the People's Republic of China changed dramatically. From 1966 to 1976, the central concern of the Cultural Revolution was the distribution of wealth and power. The primary educational goal of this period was to transform the attitudes and thinking of the Chinese people, to conduct an uninterrupted revolution against class society. In contrast, since 1976 the policies known as the "Four Modernizations" have focused on developing the means of the forces of production through supposedly neutral techniques which originated in the capitalist world. The Modernizers, led by Deng Xioping, believe that the main function of schools is to teach students the skills that will enable them to become productive laborers. By pushing brighter students ahead of slower ones, this system forces the social division between manual and intellectual labor in order to promote rapid progress of the Chinese economy. There will be time later, it is believed, to teach people the importance of a socialist political conciousness. This ideology, currently dominant, has given China the appearance of being too capitalistic in the eyes of Western Marxists, and many believe that a new revolution will be necessary to reverse it. In the main, however, Chinese society and education remain socialist. Actually, the two lines of thought, "Maoist" and "Modernist," have always co-existed in China, with one or the other dominating at a particular time. Still, the present system will produce a technocratic elite who may well replace the political elite, but this will depend on how the new elite is rewarded and controlled. (KH)

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MAO TO NOW

by

Ros Gillespie and Colin Collins
School of external Studies and Continuing Education,
University of Queensland

Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Australian Comparative and International Education Society (11th, Hamilton, New Zealand, 21-24 August, 1983)

FROM MAO TO KNOW

ROS GILLESPIE and COLIN COLINS

Scores of articles and books have been written on education in the People's Republic of China since the dramatic changes of 1976. During that year, the two most significant dramatis personnae of the Republic died (Zhou-en-Lai and Mao-tse-Tung) and four important political persons were jailed (the so-called "Gang of Four"). Although initially there was a struggle regarding the degree of implementation of the Four Modernisations, (the main Chinese Communist Party policy since 1976), this policy which was initiated by DENG XIOPING and later carried out in a moderate way by HUA GUOFUNG has now become firmly entrenched under HUYA BANG. Confirmed at the Third Plenium of the Communist Party of China in December 1978, it was completed at the Plenium in June 1981. In essence, the new policy chosen by China was one which emphasized gross output and productivity, whereas the previous policy (seen in operation during the decade 1966-1976 of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution under Chairman Mao) has as its central concern the distribution of wealth and political power.

This great swing in Chinese internal policy was reflected in the Chinese educational system. It is possible to categorize specific changes, as many scholars have shown. It is more difficult to explain what is going on, both pragmatically and theoretically, or, more specifically, whether the changes have taken place mainly as a result of the new Chinese leadership. In this essay, we intend to look at the shifts in educational style between the so-called Maoists and the Modernizers, and to a modest attempt at an explanation. The components of the essay will involve:

(1) an account of changes in the economic policy of China since 1976;
(2) an explanation of the position of education under the Four Modernisations; and
(3) notes towards a Marxist critique of the new Chinese practice.

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1. CHINESE ECONOMIC POLICY

In their book, China since the Gang of Four, Andrew Watson and Bill Brugger describe both industrial development and rural policy since the demise of the "Gang of Four". In this book, Watson's comments

concerning the changes are particularly summarive and enlightening. The post-1976 policies are summarised thus:

> The argument advanced during the Cultural Revolution that Socialist revolution in the relations of production is necessary to ensure the consolidation and development of the economic base has been revised by the argument that the relation of production must correspond to and be defined by the development of an economic base which is already, in essence, oriented towards socialism.[1]

For the Gang of Four (which represented Mao's thinking in its' more leftist characteristics), the first priority was towards controlling and reforming the relations of production, and to extending the scope of the revolution in the superstructure. For this reason, many of the main thrusts of the Cultural Revolution had been in the educational sphere, occupied as it was in transforming the attitudes and thinking of the Chinese people. Besides education issues, Maoists also addressed themselves to the continuing existence of the "Bourgeois Right" in China, evidence, for example, in the differing states accorded to different occupations, the eight-grade wage system, payment according to labour, exchange by means of money, adn the continuing existence of a commodity system.

Those who followed the so-called Deng or Modernist policy thought differently:

> While conceding that, under certain conditions, the relations of production and the superstructure could play a determining role, he (Deng) argued that while politics should be in command the aim of political work was 'to guarantee the completion of economic work and serve the economic base' ... The true test of a political line, therefore, was whether or not it promoted the development of the productive forces.[2]

As a result of such a policy, Deng advocated the use of capitalist technology and techniques. Under the Four Modernisations program, there has, for example, been a revival of interests in the positive aspects of 'scientifically determined technical management' (Taylorism) in the importance of foreign technology, the growth of foreign investment, consumerism, advertising and so on. In fact, the Chinese leadership now describes China's economy as a 'planned socialist commodity economy'.[3]

The two major aspects of the new policy must be the determining role of the system of ownership and the alleged political neutrality of science and technology.

> ... as for the former, the position has been taken that, once the system of ownership of the means of production has been transferred, objective economic laws which had a capitalist content in the old society become socialist in content and must still be observed. With respect to such things as the law of value, the role of profit, capital, credit, interest rates, payment according to work done, material incentives and the division of labor, the case is made that it is a distortion of Marxism to confuse their functioning under capital ownership.[4]

It is the same for the second area, i.e., the neutrality of science and technology. Management techniques, for example, differ greatly under socialism and capitalism. In fact:

> From the point of view of the productive forces, production in capitalist enterprises is large-scale, socialised productions based on modern technology. In this respect, there are no basic differences in the nature of the two and the two types of enterprise management must have points in common.[5]

Again and again, Chinese writers come back to the point that the institutions and technology of capitalism should be used. The historical reason is clear:

> ... in the course of human history, the highly developed commodity economy is an inevitable stage. The productive forces cannot be highly socialized until the commodity economy is fully developed ... but the highly developed commodity economy will not necessarily be a capitalist economy.[6]

Although the current Chinese system has the form of a commodity economy which uses the market as a mechanism, the regulating role of the market is firmly under the direction of the state planning committee. The argument once again is that the instruments - such as technology - are the same as under capitalism, however, the uses to which they are put are quite different under socialism. The highly developed commodity production economy which is now being brought into effect in China, is seen quite simply as a necessary stage in the society's progress towards the ideal of communism.

The difference between the Deng and the Maoist approaches to Chinese development may be reduced to a very simple equation (despite the fact that the arguments generated by the Chinese themselves are not only extremely complex but are also subject to many different permutations depending on whichever faction is in power at a specific time). Firstly, both the Modernizers and the Maoists agree that the forces of production are, in the main, socialized, i.e. communally owned (Industry, for example, is about 75% state owned, with most of the remainder being collectively owned. In rural areas over 90% of the land is owned communally). However, they draw quite different conclusions from this proposition. Maoists state that despite the communal ownership of the means of production, contradictions still exist in the consequent relations of production or class system in China. These arise either because of the remaining presence of bourgeois elements of the past, or because 'non-antagonistic contradictions' still exist, for example such as those between city and country, peasant and proletariat, and intellectual and manual labour. These contradictions, says the Maoists, which exist in the relations of production, need to be continually worked on so that China can become more socialist. Hence, a state of uninterrupted revolution, whose main emphasis is on changing attitudes, and on political education, is considered the ideal.

On the other hand, Deng followers (i.e. the Modernizers), would claim that because the means of production are communally owned, the resultant relations of production need not really be of great concern; hence, there is complete condemnation of the kind of continual watchfulness demanded during the Cultural Revolution. Rather, Deng followers assert, it is the means of the forces of production which now need to be further developed. It is believed, furthermore, that these can only be developed by using essentially neutral techniques which have originated in the capitalist world. Such techniques include everything from the market to computers. Techniques are neutral, they say, and socialists will use them to develop China's economic base in a truly socialist way.

Put thus crudely, the main argument against each position is also clear. The Mao line, it is said, leads to endless disruption of production; being 'red' rather than 'expert' is not good for material progress. The argument against Deng's position is that the use of capitalist institutions and technologies will lead to greater class differentiation in China and that China following this line, will inevitably become capitalist. Being 'expert' rather than 'red' would lead to a denial of socialism. The swing in these two positions may be clearly seen in a study of education in China.

2. EDUCATION IN CHINA

Thus, since the proclamation of the constitution of the Chinese Communist Party in 1949, China has undergone dramatic shifts and changes in policy and orientation. Sinologists, disagreeing on both the reasons for, and the extent of these shifts, have attempted explanations encompassing the great swings on continua such as 'Rightist-Leftist', or 'Maoist-Meritocratic' of (currently) Modernization-What-ever-its, to attempted explanation on a developmental pattern from pre-revolutionary feudalism, through a necessary period of commodity economy, resembling capitalism, onto a future of socialism. Protagonists of the latter position would support their view by claiming that the pendulum theorists hold only to superficial shifts in rhetoric (not even policy), but that as the social relationships and productive forces remained essentially the same, that is to say that the life of a 'normal' worker or peasant has not changed with these supposed swings), then these great swings are cosmetic. This they claim as support for their developmental view.

In this paper, we have supported a compromise position as was suggested in the preceding section, namely, that at all times since 1949 there have been two lines threading through the Chinese political fabric. Whereas at times one line was dominant, at other times, it wasn't. However, at any one time there were pulls and pushes as the two positions existed side by side.

For convenience we have labelled these positions as Maoist and Modernist. Their full positions will be detailed later in this paper.

However, before we embark on a discussion of the different lines taken on education, it is necessary to reflect on the special difficulties involved in studying China, and to glance back into recent Chinese history, in order to understand the particular nature of Chinese society today.

One factor needs to be stressed at this point, and that is, namely, that in China, perhaps more so than in any other country, educational changes are very much a part of larger political and economic changes. Education reacts immediately to even slight shifts in policy, reflecting the importance granted to it by Communist Party ideology. The government sees clearly and lucidly that it is through education that the most widespread and far-reaching influences and changes will take place.

In looking back at China's educational development since 1949 it is very obvious that education is viewed as crucial, (both ideologically and practically), when we see how educational policies were modified and changed to meet the demands of those in power at any particular use.

On the eve of Liberation, China found itself with a confused and disinherited educational system : a conglomerate of Western ideas (e.g. the division of schooling into primary, secondary, and tertiary levels), traditional patterns (emphasis on obedience, strong commitment to traditions) and the Nationalist emphasis resulting from the recognition that education was an important form of human capital investment and was the key to the creation of a labour force capable of modernizing the country (Confucianism).

Throughout China's modern history, these are the forces which led to the shaping of her educational programmes at each particular point, the guiding principles being how best can education be organised to meet the requirements of socialist reconstruction, in whatever form that was taking.

Historically, then, in brief:

The years 1949-1952 saw education based largely on the emphasis on academic skills and scores on entrance examinations;

1951, however, saw the beginning of a campaign (centred on Peking and Tientsin), for the ideological remolding of intellectuals. Marxism and Leninism were studied and teachers and academics were given programmes to build up their political consciousness. This was the beginning of the campaign against corruption and bureaucratization.

In 1952, a full literacy campaign was begun and in order to facilitate this, the written word was simplified; Mandarin was made the official spoken language.

The years 1953-57 saw China turning her back on the West[7], and looking to Russia for inspiration and example.[8] Many Chinese went to study in Russia, Russian became the most populat second language, schools and universities were modelled on the example of the USSR, textbooks were directly translated from Russian, and Russian curriculum experts were imported for advice. During this period, academic standards were raised, and technical skills took precedence over political consciousness. The emphasis was on skills for modernization and economic progress.

In 1956, there were already signs of dissatisfaction with the path China was taking and the feelings of anti-rightists were becoming increasingly vocal as recognition of discrepancies became obvious.[9] For example, children from worker and peasant families were not being adequately represented in the higher levels of education[10] and students were objecting to doing manual labour.[11]

The Great Leap Forward spanned the years 1958-1959, years during which China made a concerted effort to expand her production at a much more rapid pace than hitherto. China broke away completely with the Soviet model of socialism, there was a rapid collectivization of agriculture, and light and heavy industrial plants were developed. There was a great consciousness of the necessity to balance agricultural and economic development. There was also a reduction of the power of intellectuals and bureaucrats.

Intellectuals and cadres (government officials) were transferred to manual activities alongside the peasants in the countryside[12] and in 1958 it became obligatory on all government officers in rotation,

to spend a month occupied in physical work each year. The new desired attitude to be learned from this exercise was called "learning from the masses", and may be symbolized in the following poem:

> After ten months I wasn't the same,
> I left with much more than I came.
> I filled in the gap of my school education,
> Learnt that labour makes the nation.
> Today it's back to the city once more,
> An intellectual who now knows the score.[13]

The Great Leap Forward may be seen as the first dress rehearsal for the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Productive labour was introduced into schools,[14] a wide range of spare time and informal education was being developed, people were encouraged to engage in extensive and continuous political discussions, and political consciousness was emphasized over technical skills.

Between the years 1960 and 1965, college examinations still existed, and the rightist forces, capitalizing on the natural disasters (e.g. the flood of 1960 which caused serious food losses), once again exerted their control and there was potential for widespread rioting in the fermenting of anti-communist feelings. Mao's dictate on February 27, 1957:

> 'Let a hundred flowers bloom
> Let a hundred schools contend.'[15]

was brought to a sharp halt during the years 1960-65.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution began with Mao Tse-Dung's May 7th, 1966, Directive:

> "While students' main task is to study, they should in addition to their studies, learn other things, that is, industrial work, farming and military affairs. They should also criticize the bourgeoisie. The school term should be shortened, education should be revolutionized, and the domination of our schools by bourgeois intellectuals should not be allowed to continue."[16]

and again in August 1968 in the communique of the Twelfth Plenium:

> "The working class must lead all forms of education and must practice proletarian dictatorship in every cultural sphere of the superstructure in order to fulfill in various stages the tasks of struggle, criticism, and

> reform, as put forward by Chairman Mao, and to carry the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution through to the end."[17]

Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tse-Dung Thought was taken as the theoretical basis guiding the thinking of the new Chinese Communist Party Constitution in April 1969.

The early days of the Cultural Revolution were days of intense intellectural and militant dispute. Students and workers were encouraged to criticize authorities. Schools, which had been closed in 1966, put into effect upon reopening, the policy of Mao 'of education serving proletarian politics and education being combined with productive labour'. Schooling was shortened, courses were fewer, students took part in industrial work, farming, military affairs, and the political struggles of the cultural revolution.

Posters expressing mass discontent were put up on news-stands and were widely broadcast throughout the radio and press. On August 5th, 1966, Mao put up his own poster titled 'Bombard the Headquarters.'

Industrial workers, peasants, and the People's Liberation Army (P.L.A.) were all to play a part in the schooling process. The army was entreated to 'reach into the very souls of people...to create and cultivate among the masses an entirely new proletarian ideology and culture and entirely new proletarian customs and habits.'[18] The army was to become a great educational agency, 'a great school' of Mao Tse-Tung's thought[19] which would:

> "Launch many-sided cultural activities which are rich in revolutionary educational significance, read revolutionary books, sing revolutionary songs, perform revolutionary plays, see revolutionary films, tell revolutionary stories, listen to revolutionary broadcasts...'[20]

Later we will analyze and detail the effects of the Cultural Revolution on education.[21] For now it is sufficient to note that the Cultural Revolution restated the ideals of the '49 Proletarian Revolution twenty years later, by restoring revolutionary vigor, re-affirming socialist ideals, and above all, stressing that the ideas and decisions of the new Socialist society were to come from the people. It was a triumph for mass involvement, and with that came individual commitment, responsibility and dedication to the ideal of a

classless society.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was officially pronounced as having ended in 1976 when, in October, the Gang of Four were arrested and imprisoned. Mao Tse-Dung had died in September, whereupon those government officials who had been criticized, humiliated and purged during the years 1966-76, once again seized power and announced the new policy emphasis on economic modernization, namely of modernization of industry, agriculture, science and technology and defence. These are what is referred to as the "four modernizations".

Great changes were seen on the educational front; hierarchical differentiation of schools were reinstated; the curriculum was lengthened; academic standards increased, examinations reintroduced, productive labour abolished; political criticism periods disappeared; academic titles restored, and individual achievement in terms of productivity were encouraged and rewarded.

This brings us up to the present day, with Deng Xiaping holding the reins of power and China's future being unknown and unpredictable. It is almost impossible to estimate the importance of the contemporary situation in Chinese history, a feat which can only be effected with the wisdom of hindsight.

As may be seen from the foregoing amble through China's modern history, there have been two basic opposing ideologies underlying policy shifts. It is our intention now to focus these contradictory beliefs onto the education arena and to look in detail at the implication each has for education. The two lines are epitomized in the policies of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and the post-C.R. period, that of the Four Modernizations. However, it is important to remember that those two lines have existed side by side since 1921, given power in 1949 and have since been involved in a see-sawing of political identities and power figures.

For convenience, the two factions will be called Maoists and Modernists.

Starting first with the Maoist line. Education was to produce people who were "Red and Expert" with redness being foremost. The 'new man' as a result of Maoist education would be a selfless person, and loyal to the people and the Party. This person would be interested in taking an active role in Chinese society, would not just study and understand it theoretically, but would work actively to further its development. (S)he was to be class conscious, and at all times be sensitive in detecting differences in class structure and be ever ready to take steps to try to eliminate them. (S)he was to be a person with scientific skills and trained to be rational and interested in investigation. Thus, the curriculum emphasized practice as being more important than theory.

Integral to the curriculum was the concept of productive labour. From the earliest kindergarten years to the most complex and sophisticated tertiary study, 'Productive Labour' was seen as the pivot point of the curriculum : school factories were attached to some city schools in the form of workshops; farm area was given to commune schools in the countryside; poor urban schools sent their students into neighbourhood factories; some schools conducted their productive labour sessions in the normal classrooms. Productive labour was the means whereby students of all ages were involved in manual labour for some periods in the week. Productive labour was seen as a fundamental activity of the educational process because it was regarded as an indispensible means of producing persons with a well-balanced development and a proletarian outlook, that is, morally, intellectually, and physically fit persons who would be able to undertake successfully the main tasks of a Maoist China, namely, engage in the class struggle, in the struggle for production, and in scientific experimentation. Furthermore, this type of activity was to promote a love of labour, and a realization of the importance of production in overcoming China's economic backwardness.

In this way the previous bourgeois attitude of contempt of manual labour by anyone who had acquired formal education, was challenged, and was changed to become a recognition of the importance of the formation of proletarian attitudes towards labour which was central in the class struggle against bourgeois values. Maoist

emphasis on productive labour is very much in line with Marx who said "an early combination of productive labour with education is one of the most potent means for the transformation of present-day society."

The other side of the productive labour coin was the attachment to factories of July 21st Workers' Colleges[22] and Workers universities. The aim here was to produce practical-minded technicians with an understanding of the production process.

Productive labour was introduced to foster political and class consciousness, to develop technical skills, to minimize the difference between manual and intellectual work, and to promote respect and appreciation of manual work, and manual workers.

Also included in the curriculum was the subject Politics and Philosophy in which were studied the thought and practice of the three thinkers who underpin the policy of the Chinese Government Party, namely Marx, Lenin and Mao Tse-Dung. The curriculum also emphasized political consciousness in both the pedagogy and the content of all its subjects.

As regards to access to education, particularly at its higher levels, the Maoists aimed to educate children from working class and peasant background in proportion to their distribution in the population. Entrance to higher education was only to take place after secondary school graduates had worked in a factory or in the countryside for at least two years. The aspiring tertiary student would then need the recommendation and support of his/her workmates, and the final selection would be made on three criteria: (1) political consciousness and commitment to the revolution; (2) class background, with positive discrimination towards the worker and peasant class; and (3) intellectual ability, a low third in importance.

Not only were there to be no special schools for talented children, but there was to be no ability grouping within schools. Maoists were firmly committed to the notion of the commual sharing not only of property, but of knowledge, and maintained that by being in one class, bright children may help slower ones and so give them an opportunity to get the most out of education.

Maoists would shorten courses and reduce the time spent in schools and universities. Assessment methods were varied, and traditional examining would lose its force as teachers made more use of examinations as diagnostic and teaching tools.

Finally, the school management was overhauled to pave the way for the introduction of revolutionary committees, decision-making bodies, on which there was representation of all interested members of the institution.[23] This collective leadership demonstrated in their work the importance of collective thinking and socialist consciousness. As a consequence of their mixed membership (i.e. lay, professional, and party) they were able to ensure that schools maintained a close connection with local, proletarian, and party interests.

At all times the Chinese were to be aware of the evils of specialization and bureaucracies. Government officials (cadres) were sent to MAY 7th Cadre Schools to learn how to mix with, and assist the people. High school students, upon graduation, were sent to the countryside to assist the farmers and to learn how the peasants lived and worked, as were also teachers and academics.

Thus through a strong politicization programme, the Maoists aimed at raising the political consciousness of the people in order to motivate them to work, to prepare them to live in the new socialist society, and to clarify and publicize the goals of educational and social equality which were to be the underlying tenet of that society.

These then were the educational ideas of the Maoists, who dominated during the period known as the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. By these methods, they maintained, a China would be developed which would be both economically and politically strong, and, with the isolationist policy accompanying this, China would stand united as an independent power self-sufficient and unified in its goal towards reaching a communist state.

Turning now to look at the Modernizers who hold control at the current time, and had been gaining this hold increasingly since the arrest, in October 1976, of the Gang of Four.

The Modernizers emphasize the importance of rapid economic modernization and use this as the guiding principle dictating their policy on all matters.

While agreeing with the aim of 'red and expert', Modernizers place the emphasis squarely on expertise. Supporters believe that the main function of the schools is to teach students the academic and technical skills that will enable them to become productive members of the labour force. As these proponents believe that large scale nationalization and collective ownership ignores the private sector of the economy and sees individual ownership as a necessary supplement to the socialist economy, so too do they maintain the individual excellence in school be rewarded and reinforced through the provision of special schools, special facilities and special consideration to such students. Bright children should be pushed ahead as quickly and as efficiently as possible to ensure the most efficient use of resources.

The curriculum for bright students will have an emphasis on theoretical study, with more practical work being allocated to the normal and dull students. While this once again forces the social division between manual and intellectual labour and hence exasapates the class differences with increased differentiation of salary, the Modernists would claim this to be a necessary path towards rapid progress, and hence the development of the Chinese economy, after which they can again afford to spend time on teaching people the importance of a socialist political consciousness and once again engage in a class struggle.

Productive labour has been all but taken out of the educational programme, and, where it remains, the intention is to develop the technical skills of the student and to help in production. The purpose of political contientisizing for which the Maoists introduced the concept of productive labour, has, in the main, disappeared.

The Modernists have lengthened and extended the school and tertiary years. Entrance to tertiary institutions is primarily on results of competitive examinations which were reintroduced in 1976. Workers universities and colleges have closed, and as a result new

production level heights have been achieved as more time is spent on the shop floor.

As regards administration, the Modernists have replaced the revolutionary committee with principals, directors and managers. The rationale is based on grounds of efficiency and productivity.

Modernists aim to produce a group of skilled people who can help revive economic output and productivity. Despite the acknowledged inequities in the educational system where children from privileged families have an increased advantage, the argument is made that in order to attain a communist state it is necessary first to raise the standard of living and the level of education of the people. The class struggle must be postponed as must the politicization of the population until China has achieved modernization. This will be when the communes become mechanized, the factories automated, and when the level of scientific enterprise has brought China into the computer and space age. Only then, claim the Modernists, can the Maoist emphasis be re-employed. Until then, everything that promotes the goal of Modernization is justified and applicable.

The Modernizers in separating the technical and scientific from the political and ideological show the latter as almost a luxury, the enjoyment of which is donated by hard-headed and disciplined attention to the former. Modernizers treat the struggle for production and technical advance and the class struggle as independent struggles governed by different principles and requirements. Thus it follows for the Modernists that class struggle is conceived in limited and discrete terms as "politics"; and so as a battle against groups representing capitalists and for the consolidation of socialist education and ideology. This would take place in schools, in the Party, through the media and so forth, in locations largely physically separate from those where the technical and production struggles would take place.

Since 1949 the Chinese people have been receiving increasingly contradictory messages about the purposes of the experiences they were undergoing. It is not surprising then, that many are confused and torn

and have resorted to convenient amnesia in wishing to keep favour with the regime. Many say that the current trends cannot be reversed without another revolution, that separation and class divisions have already gone too deeply. However, the contribution of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution cannot be erased and the latter-day condemnation of it exposing what were at times, its patchy application and the provisional and fragile nature of its operation is not to abandon its significance. It remains a coherent and unique experiment by the Maoists, and a worthy critique of the Modernizers.

That the current regime is having problems is quite clearly shown. In April, 1981, Mao, apparently consigned to the dustbin of history a year before, was picked out and dusted off, represented as seriously mistaken only in the late years of his life. So, whether his ideals and those of his followers will ever be restored, remains the secrete of history.

3. CHINESE PRACTICE AND MARXIST CRITIQUE

The changes in Chinese education having been described, the question may now be asked as to why they have been introduced within the current Chinese context. While admitting that the turnabout from the Maoist to a 'modernizing' policy was not as drastic in some educational facets as in others, changes of great importance have been noted. Why did these changes occur? Were they due to a certain pragmatism in the face of the alleged failures of the Cultural Revolution? (It is significant that the power-wielders in the China of 1976-81 are known as the "Practice" group), or, on the other hand, has the change which has taken place been a result of significant alteration in the socialist ideology which dominates Chinese education?

Ron Price would answer this in terms of the failure of the Maoist line to produce results, and the greater pragmatism of the new leaders. In his "Education, why a Reversal",[24] he points out that in the first place, there is a great lack of educational theory in China, which, in his estimation, has led to a predominance of pragmatism. He asserts that:

> "The twelve years of discussion (and perhaps, eight years of experiment) which followed 1966 exhibit a poverty of theory which some sympathetic observers find it hard to admit. For all the wall posters, pages of newsprint and the millions of participants in word and deed, educational theory has not been advanced beyond a small number of propositions put forward by Mao himself."[25]

Price goes on to state that the Chinese never seemed to produce an educational theory, in absence of which the Chinese leadership constantly reverted to methods of education that had been tried and found successful elsewhere. In order to bring about progress, the Chinese assert, the examination system must be used, elite schools and universities created and special consideration given to research concerns. Schooling increasingly came to be viewed as a neutral tool in the hands of the socialist bureaucracy, which would produce the experts needed for modernizing. As Price says:

> "...given the present leaderships' economic goals and perceived needs for specialists, it is not surprising that they turn to methods of training which have demonstrated their effectiveness in China and abroad."[26]

Pragmatism or 'practice' is, however, an ideology in itself and certainly has outcomes that may be at variance with state policies. The obvious question that is now being asked is: How red/socialist is China? As the same question has been more frequently asked of Soviet society and because we maintain that the Peoples' Republic of China is now more closely approximating the Soviet Union in its quest for modernisation, it may be apposite to mention the two major theories concerning modern socialist societies.

These two theories are both marxist. One being, that the Soviet and other socialist societies are, in fact, bureaucratic forms of state capitalism, the other, that such societies are transitional economies of a worker state.

The state capitalist thesis is levelled as a criticism by such marxists as Herbert Marcuse,[27] (1958:105), Sweezy and Bettelheim,[28] (1971), as also by the International Socialists (now the Socialist Workers Party) and, of course, by the Chinese Communist Party after the

death of Stalin (1953). It's main criticisms could be summarised thus:

(1) For the Soviet, the October 1917 Revolution created the conditions for the development of a capitalist mode of production because the means of production were not at a level superior to those of advanced capitalist societies;

(2) Socialist relations of production do not simply follow from the state ownership through nationalisation of the means of production;

(3) State ownership of the means of production may give rise to a ruling class (i.e. bureaucracy) deriving its power from its control over the means of production.[29]

Could this rather harsh opinion of the Soviet be applied to post 1976 China? We think not. Rather, Chinese writers and policy makers have declared themselves, at least in rhetoric, far closer to the "Workers State" theorists of the socialist society. This concept was originally developed by Trotsky, and the elaboration of the thesis of the transitional economy has been carried out by Ernest Mandel. This position can rather loosely be summarized as follows:

(1) The Society bureaucracy is not a class: "...it is recruited, supplemented and preserved in the manner of an administrative heirarchy, independent of any special property relations of its own."[30]

(2) The fundamental purpose of capitalists accumulation is the aim of producing surplus value: "Profit remains the purpose and driving force of capitalist production which in turn is based on competition and the quest for markets."[31] In the Soviet system, accumulation is for producing use-values, which is based on central planning which decides on the level and growth of production and accumulation. Hence, for Mandel such societies have a non-capitalist mode of production, but a basically bourgeois mode of distribution (Mandel, 1969, 14). Thus such societies are:

(3) Transitional societies, i.e. half-way between capitalism and socialism. These societies are not classless. Moreover they still have "a partial commodity production, not yet universal production for use; there is still money; there are still social conflicts and there is still a state."[32] (Mandel, 1969, 17).

It is not possible to detail this analysis here, but it would seem to us that, in broad outline at least, this is the view that post-1976 China has of itself. To quote only one example:

> "Social production does not depend merely on regulation by planning but also gives full play to the regulatory role of the market under the direction of State planning. ...Despite the fact that common labour and common ownership by the entire society does not exist different degrees and divergent forms of such labour and ownership have been achieved... The road (chosen by China) shows that the material foundation for communism can be built on highly socialized production deriving from the full development of the socialist commodity production."[33]

This cursory glance at how Marxists see modern Socialist societies and China in particular does not do justice to the richness of the material produced. What has been presented here in skeletal form is designed only to enlighten the debate on Chinese education. In terms of the wider society, Maoists would probably declare the modernizing policies to be moving China on the road to state capitalism. The followers of Deng would see themselves as a socialist worker state in transition between capitalism and full socialism. What of education?

Western Marxists have had much to say about systems of education under capitalism. Because almost all write at a very generalised level concerning macro issues, the propositions produced are frequently embarrassingly vague. The main statements of western marxists are as follows:

(1) The most important element in all social formations is the economic base or the means/forces of production. The social relations of production or the way in which people or groups of people relate to each other are dependent upon the relationship of people to the means of production.

(2) The ruling class control capitalist societies mainly by accumulating via the use of surplus value. In order to continue their ownership over the means of production, they need to maintain capitalist relations of production. To do so, they need to control:

   (a) the state and its agencies

   (b) the prevailing ideology (hemomonic control)

   (c) the schools.

(3) Change from capitalism to socialism needs to be directed to altering the ownership of the means of production. This can only be done by the proletariat or those who do not own.

(4) Schooling is a minor part of the superstructure of a particular social formation. Under capitalism, schooling is for the purpose of:

(a) producing the kind of labour that capitalists need (i.e. some intellectual, others manual); who have the appropriate skills and attitudes (discipline for the worker). In short, schools reproduce the class nature of society;

(b) reproducing the dominant ideology needed to perpetuate the capitalists system (as, for example, the importance of the individual, self-achievement, and competition).

(5) Hence change towards a socialist society:

(a) cannot be won or fought in a significant way in the schools (Gramsci an exception?)

(b) any reforms in schools can only be of a mildly 'preparatory' character.

For the most part, marxist educational writers have not turned their attention to socialist societies. We go further and state that most western educationalists writings are so general as to have little use in analysing what is transpiring in socialist or quasi-socialist societies. The propositions enunciated are simply inadequate, not merely because they don't point to a socialists utopia in detail but because they don't really explain in detail what goes on in capitalist societies. There are two different views on education in China today, and it is not sufficient to declare one (the Maoist) socialist, and the other (the Modernist) to be quasi-capitalist. One Chinese statement on the schooling system of a transitional socialist commodity economy could be of interest.[34] (It should be noted that many such articles are now appearing within China.)

The core of this article grades the various opinions within marxism concerning education as part of the superstructure. The grading is fairly obvious, and sees education as either a very strong element in society, to be concentrated on in any socialist society (the Maoist view) to another which sees education more as a productive

force (the Dengist view). The 5 views are interesting; they are as follows:

(1) Education is a superstructure of society.

This is a view which the author seems to impute to the Gang of Four, whom, he says, mistakenly argue for "exercising all-round dictatorship in the realm of the superstructure" and education which is an integral part of it.

(2) Education is basically a superstructure.

In this view, education as part of the superstructure, is 'indirectly related to the forces of production through the medium of productive relations'. But, and this seems crucial to China's new educational policy, "among severan factors of education, there are some relatively stable ones which are common to all classes and do not fall within the category of superstructure."[35] (p. 19). Included in these would be:

- the natural sciences, some objective truths, and data in the social sciences, spoken and written language and the skills of culture and art.
- some parts of the educational system, e.g. facts on school age, the arrangement of educational institutions, some ways of organizing courses, some pedagogical principles, methods and means.
- knowledge of the laws governing the physical and mental development of children.

Hence the next position:

(3) One part of education belongs to the superstructure; the other does not.

In this section, the author declares that education has two functions. He maintains that "in class society any part of education that is related to its ideological and political orientation (emphasis mine) has a class character and belongs to the superstructure". The second function is "neutral" from a class point of view and does not belong to that superstructure. This other function is "to serve the growth of production, which means spreading the experience in labour and the knowledge of production."[36] This other function is concerned with "producing the knowledge of science and generating new knowledge of science."[37]

(4) Education as a whole does not belong to the superstructure but is part of the productive forces.

The next position hardly seems distinguishable from the manpower theorists in capitalist countries. Marxist language is still being used:

> "..with the development of the inner contradictions of productive forces, especially since science and technology are participating in modern production as an independent factor (emphasis ours), among the productive forces, education has changed from a condition of production to an independent factor in the productive process and has become an important part of a nation's economy."

Then, however, the author goes on to take education right back into the "independent" economic base by using the concept of "educational investment". As he states:

> "...besides labour power and the means of production which are the basic factors, other important economic factors have been added to them such as science and technology, the science of management, technical personnel and educational investment."[38]

This view is crucial and would seem to be the present 'marxist' view of education in China. The major components of education are value neutral and have nothing to do with superstructure and ideology. Education, like science, technology and management, has to do with the economic base of society; they follow objective laws, laws common to both socialist and capitalist societies.

(5) Education is closely related to all aspects of social life.

The last view seems to take education out of a marxist framework (or at least this particular one) completely. "Marx and Engles never said that every completed social phenomenon should be identified with the base or with the superstructure. Stalin pointed out that some social phenomena belong neither to the base nor to the superstructure."[39]

Finally, the author gives the reason for this analysis:

> "Now that the Gang of Four has been smashed, we should give up this inaccurate and unscientific formilation (that education is part of the superstructure and a site of class struggle) and replace it with the slogan 'education must serve socialist modernisation'".[40]

CONCLUSIONS:

1. The first conclusion that can be drawn from the foregoing has already been stated, namely that although two particular 'emphases' have been cited as representing the literature concerning Chinese development in general and education in particular, yet the two lines often intermeshed and exist at the same time albeit sometimes not in the same location. In the main, however, we are of the opinion that Chinese society is still definitely socialist. In particular, we incline to seeing it as a 'transitional worker state' with at least a partial emphasis on commodity production.

2. The educational system is being used to reproduce the prevailing ideology. This ideology has shifted from being a primary focus as during the Cultural Revolution in which its main tenet was that of a classless society to that of being of minor importance but in which the message of the 'hidden curriculum' is that of a meritocracy. Hence many of the practices - as opposed to the statements - within the current post-1976 ideology have many of the appearances of those of a capitalist state.

3. The effects of these new practices will undoubtedly produce a technocratic elite whom, in the last analysis, may well replace the political elite in China. As already stated, whether this does happen or not will depend on the way in which this new elite is rewarded and controlled. That is the question which the Chinese leaders will soon face in a society in which commodity production is being encouraged.

FOOTNOTES

1. Brugger, W. ed. China Since the Gang of Four, 1980, p.90.

2. Ibid., p.92.

3. Bejing Review, vol.34, 24 August, 1981.

4. Brugger, 1980, p.93.

5. Jiang Xuemu CMRB, 23 September, 1978.

6. Bejing Review, vol.35, 24 August, 1981, p.17.

7. This was a direct result of the Korean War (1950-53) when hostility to modern influences symbolically highlighted the interference and indignity that China had suffered for a hundred years at the hands of Western powers.

8. This was especially after the signing of an agreement with the USSR on scientific and cultural cooperation in 1954.

9. In April 1956, Mao told the political bureau that certain errors existed in the Soviet model of socialism, and that China should learn from, but not uncritically copy Soviet policies. See Mao Tse-Tung, On the Ten Major Relationships (1956), in Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung Vol.V. Bejing: People's Publishing House, pp.184-307, 1977. See also Mao Tse-tung, On the Correct Handling of Contradiction Among the People, (1957), ibid., pp.384-421.

10. Fraser, S. ed. Chinese Communist Education: Records of the First Decade, N.Y., Wiley and Son, 1965.

11. Nee, V. The Cultural Revolution at Peking University, N.Y., Monthly Review Press, 1969.

12. Estimates of numbers transferred range from one million to 'many million'.

13. Peking Review, 11, no.6, 10 February, 1959.

14. For full description, see pp.13-14 of this article.

15. Mao Tse Tung. On the correct handling of contradictions ... op.cit., p.207.

16. Shi Ming Hu, and Eli Seifman, eds. Toward a New World Outlook: A Documentary History of Education in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1976, N.Y., AMS Press, 1976.

17. Peking Review, 6 September, 1968.

18. The Great Socialist Cultural Revolution in China, Peking Foreign Language Press, 1966, p.23.

19. Mao Tse-Tung, 7 May, 1966, The 7 May Directive.

20. The Great Socialist ... op.cit., p.24.

21. see p.16 of this article.

22. Named from the Shanghai Machine Tools Plant in 1968 which first introduced the idea of Workers' Colleges to "create technicians from among the workers".

23. Thus in a school, the Revolutionary Committee would include representation not only of the staff and student body, but also of the janitor, clerical staff, parents, community members and members of the Peoples' Liberation Army and the Communist Party.

24. Price, Ron. In W. Brugger, China since the Gang of Four.

25. Ibid., p.203.

26. Ibid., p.226.

27. Marcuse, H. Soviet Marxism: A Critical Analysis, Routledge, 1958.

28. Sweezy, P. and Bettelheim, C. On the Transition to Socialism. Moulting Review Press, 1971.

29. Lane, D. The Socialist Industrial State: Towards a Political Sociology of State Socialism, Allen and Unwin, 1976.

30. Ibid., p.30.

31. Ibid., p.37.

32. Mandel, E. The Inconsistencies of State Capitalism, 1969.

33. Bejing Review, no.34, 24 August, 1981, pp.16, 17.

34. Li KEJING in Social Sciences in China, no.3, 1980.

35. Op.cit., p.19

36. Op.cit., p.19.

37. Op,cit., p.20.

38. Op.cit., p.21.

39. Op.cit., p.22.

40. Op.cit., p.24.